



Introduction

Ah! The first warm days of spring are here. You can feel the sunshine on your face as you gaze across the frozen lake. What is that sound!? You hear a soft tinkling, and suddenly parts of the ice break into pencil-like crystals, which fall into the water. Waves of water lap the edges and make even more ice break off. Before long you stand looking out over open water. You have just experienced ice out.

Ice out on a lake is the day in spring when the ice leaves. Over the years, these dates have been important to people who have used the frozen lake for ice harvesting, ice fishing, dog sledding or other types of recreation and transportation. People who have used open water of lakes for log driving and boating also have had an interest in ice out and have recorded ice out dates on lots of Maine lakes.



Jeepers Peepers Essay Grades 4-6

Essay Question

Ice out means that humans can use the lake in different ways, but it also has an effect on the animals and plants that make the lake their home. During winter under the ice, the water is cold and still. Many creatures stay close to the bottom, and some of them are dormant all winter long. When the ice melts and the water is exposed everything changes. The sun warms the water, and wind mixes the lake.



Grades 4-6

Imagine that you are a lake animal or plant who is experiencing the exciting transition from winter to spring. You

could be a fish, beaver, insect, plant, turtle, frog or any other lake creature listed on the Jeepers Peepers web resources page. <http://www.state.me.us/dep/blwq/doceducation/jeepers/links.htm#iceout>



Research your creature and write about your life cycle and how ice out affects you.

Describe:

1. what you eat,
2. how you avoid predators,
3. where you live when there is ice on the lake and when ice has left the lake.



Grade 5-6 Extension

Describe at least one way ice out makes it easier and one way that makes it harder for your creature to survive.

Finally, look at the graph provided, which shows ice out dates on a Maine lake. Interpret the graph, and talk about what the trend of ice out could mean to your creature in the future.

Essay length:

4th grade 200 words, 5th—6th grade 400 words

Sample Graph of Ice Out Data

Lake Auburn Ice Out
Auburn

